

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An exhaust gas control apparatus for an internal combustion engine, ~~provided with~~comprising:

\_\_\_\_\_ -a NOx storage/reduction catalyst (7) provided in an exhaust passage and which stores NOx in exhaust gas by at least one of adsorption and absorption when an air-fuel ratio of in-flowing exhaust gas is lean, and then reduces and purifies the stored NOx using reduction components in the exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio of the in-flowing exhaust gas is rich, ~~the apparatus comprising:~~wherein:

an upstream side portion (7a) of a carrier of the NOx storage/reduction catalyst (7), ~~which is~~ positioned on an upstream side of an exhaust gas flow, and a downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) of the NOx storage/reduction catalyst (7), ~~which is~~ positioned on the downstream side of the exhaust gas flow, wherein flow:

\_\_\_\_\_ the carrier (7a, 7b) carries an oxygen storage component that absorbs oxygen in the exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is lean and releases the absorbed oxygen when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas is ~~rich, and rich;~~

\_\_\_\_\_ the amount of the oxygen storage component on the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made less than the amount of the oxygen storage component on the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b);carrier; and

~~characterized in that~~

a NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b).

2. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) carry at least one of platinum, palladium and rhodium, and the NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b). is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) by changing an amount of at least one of platinum, palladium and rhodium carried on the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b).

3. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the NOx storage capacity of the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) is made greater than the NOx storage capacity of the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) by changing at least one of a carrier cell shape, a carrier cell size, and a carrier cell number on the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b).

4. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) are provided separately.

5. (Previously Presented) The exhaust gas control apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the upstream side portion (7a) of the carrier (7a, 7b) and the downstream side portion (7b) of the carrier (7a, 7b) are provided integrally.